

Message Text

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PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1379
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3322

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

BRUSSELS FOR MOOSE

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: FIRST DISCUSSIONS OF CONFERENCE
MECHANISMS

1. SUMMARY: GRAHAM AND LOW MET AGAIN WITH OFFICIALS
OF THE REGIME (GAYLARD, CLAYPOLE AND GEORGE SMITH).
FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE WERE ABLE TO DISCUSS IN SOME
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DETAIL OUR THOUGHTS ON A POSSIBLE CONFERENCE. THE
REST OF THE CONVERSATION RELATED TO OUR REACTIONS IN
THE EVENT THE REGIME PROCEEDS WITH THE INTERNAL
SETTLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. FOR THE FIRST TIME OFFICIALS AGREED TO SET ASIDE
THEIR OBJECTIONS TO A CONFERENCE AND EXPLORE WITH US

EXACTLY WHAT WE HAD IN MIND FOR CONFERENCE. THE FIRST QUESTION THEY RAISED WAS LOCATION. WE SAID SALISBURY WAS NOT POSSIBLE; NAIROBI HAD ADVANTAGES BUT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THEM AND WAS UNACCEPTABLE TO ZANU. THEY SAID THAT BUILDING A STRUCTURE ON THE ROAD PART OF THE BRIDGE BETWEEN LIVINGSTON AND VICTORIA FALLS WAS IMPRACTICAL. THEY SEEMED SOMEWHAT MORE ATTRACTED TO THE IDEA OF THE NOW CLOSED HOTEL AT CHOBE GAME PARK NEAR KAZUNGULA WHERE RHODESIA, ZAMBIA, THE CAPRIVA STRIP AND RHODESIA MEET. THEIR ONLY CONCERN WAS SECURITY, AND THEY ASKED WHETHER WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO HELP. WE SAID THAT WAS SOMEWHAT DELICATE AND WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT WITH THE BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT BUT WE COULD LOOK INTO IT. THE ONE OTHER LOCATION CONSIDERED WAS LONDON IN THE EVENT WE DECIDED ON INITIAL UNPUBLICIZED CONTACTS.

3. ALL AGREED THAT CAREFUL PREPARATION WAS NECESSARY. IN RESPONSE TO THEIR QUESTION, WE SAID THAT WE FELT ALL SUBJECTS WOULD HAVE TO BE OPEN FOR DISCUSSION. THEY SEEMED TO FEEL THE INITIAL SPADEWORK WOULD NEED TO BE DONE ON THE OFFICIAL LEVEL--I.E., THEMSELVES JOINED PERHAPS BY SOME AFRICAN ADVISORS. WE SAID THAT WOULD BE UP TO THEM BUT AGREED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR LOWER-LEVEL TALKS TO DEFINE THE ISSUES, EXPLORE COMMON GROUND AND NARROW THE DIFFERENCES. THE EXPRESSED CONCERN

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OVER THE AMOUNT OF TIME WHICH WOULD BE INVOLVED. WE AGREED AND SAID THAT WAS WHY WE WANTED A LOCATION NOT FAR FROM SALISBURY, SO THAT THEY COULD CARRY ON WITH THEIR OWN WORK AT THE SAME TIME. THEY ENVISAGED THREE AREAS OF DISCUSSION: MILITARY, TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND THE CONSTITUTION. WE RESPONDED THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT USUALLY COMBINES MILITARY AND TRANSITIONAL MATTERS INTO ONE BUT BELIEVE THAT COULD BE WORKED OUT.

4. THERE WAS A SHORT DISCUSSION OF THE PRESENCE OF OBSERVERS--UN, COMMONWEALTH, FRONTLINE, ETC.--NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE RHODESIANS SAID THAT FRONTLINE OBSERVERS WOULD CREATE PROBLEMS. THEY SAID THEY HAD NO OBJECTION TO PREM CHAND AND HAD BEEN SURPRISED THAT HE HAD NOT ACCOMPANIED SECRETARIES VANCE AND OWEN DURING THEIR VISIT IN APRIL.

5. GAYLARD ASKED ABOUT THE PROCEDURES AFTER AN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED, AND GRAHAM EXPLAINED THAT WE WOULD GO TO THE UN, WHICH WE ESTIAMATED WOULD TAKE FOUR OR FIVE WEEKS DURING WHICH TIME THE UK WOULD ENACT THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION. HE SAID WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT

BE POSSIBLE FOR BOTH SIDES TO APPROACH THE MATTER LEGALLY
FROM DIFFERENT ENDS; THAT IS, THE UK AMEND THE
CONSTITUTION OF '61 WHILE RHODESIANS AMENDED
THE '69 CONSTITUTION TO COME UP WITH THE SAME DOCUMENT.
IN THIS WAY BOTH SIDES WOULD BE SATISFYING THEIR LEGAL
REQUIREMENTS WITHOUT POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES. WE WOULD
HAVE TO GO TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO REPEAL SANCTIONS.
IN RESPONSE TO THEIR QUESTION, WE SAID WE DOUBTED THAT THE
RUSSIANS WOULD EXERCISE THEIR VETO IF THE PATRIOTIC
FRONT AND FRONTLINE HAD AGREED. WE NOTED THAT THE OVERALL
TIMETABLE TO INDEPENDENCE WOULD PROBABLY BE EXTENDED
SINCE A CAMPAIGN WOULD BE NECESSARY. AFRICANS WE HAD TALKED
TO (ZAPU), HOWEVER, WERE PREPARED TO SUPPORT SUCH AN
EXTENSION PUBLICLY.
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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

BRUSSELS FOR MOOSE

FROM LOW

6. GAYLARD THEN PROCEEDED TO ASK TWO QUESTIONS. HE SAID IT WAS THEIR FIRM INTENTION TO PROCEED WITH ELECTIONS BEGINNING IN DECEMBER WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS A TOTAL CEASEFIRE. IF ORDER COULD BE MAINTAINED AND A REASONABLE VOTE TURNED OUT, THE ELECTED GOVERNMENT WOULD BE INSTALLED BY THE 14TH OR 15TH OF DECEMBER. THEY RECOGNIZED THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SATISFY THE UK, US AND OTHERS ON THIS. WHAT, HE ASKED, WOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS
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SENDING OBSERVERS? GRAHAM INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT THINK WE WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE PART IN ANY ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE PRESENT AGREEMENT, THOUGH WE WOULD ACCEPT THE RESULTS OF A FAIR ELECTION. GAYLORD ASKED HOW WE COULD TELL IT WAS FAIR IF WE DID NOT HAVE OBSERVERS THERE. WHAT WOULD WE CONSIDER A FAIR ELECTION? HOW MANY NEEDED TO PARTICIPATE? WE SAID THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A CLEAR INDICATION OF A SIGNIFICANT DE-ESCALATION IN HOSTILITIES AND WIDE PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS. A FREEING OF THE MEDIA AND LIFTING OF CENSORSHIP WOULD PROBABLY ALSO BE IMPORTANT. GAYLARD NOTED THAT THE PARTIES WOULD GET EQUAL TIME ON THE TELEVISION AND RADIO NETWORKS FROM THE TIME THE ELECTION WAS DECLARED. CLAYPOLE COMPLAINED THAT LACK OF UK AND US BACKING WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR FAILURE OF SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TO BUILD UP. GRAHAM AGAIN REVIEWED WHAT WE CONSIDER TO BE THE INADEQUACIES OF THE SETTLEMENT, AND I NOTED THAT THEY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISED AT THE LACK OF UK-US BACKING. WE HAD WARNED THEM MANY TIMES BEFORE THEY VENTURED INTO THE SETTLEMENT, AS WE WERE NOW WARNING THEM OF THE DANGER OF INSTITUTIONALIZING CIVIL WAR BY INSTALLING A GOVERNMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF A SIGNIFICANT DE-ESCALATION IN HOSTILITIES AND A CONVINCING DEMONSTRATION OF POPULAR SUPPORT THROUGH AN OPEN, FAIR AND IMPARTIAL ELECTION.

7. COMMENT: AS WE HAVE LEARNED BEFORE, THE WILLINGNESS OF GAYLARD AND THE OTHER OFFICIALS TO ENTER INTO DETAILED DISCUSSION OF A PROPOSAL OF OURS IS NO INDICATION OF SUPPORT OR EVEN SYMPATHY FOR IT. AS CAREFUL OFFICIALS, THEY WANT TO HAVE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS THEY MAY BE ASKED BY THEIR POLITICAL SUPERIORS AND, IF NECESSARY, PROVIDE THEM WITH AMMUNITION TO CRITICIZE OUR

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PROPOSAL. NEVERTHELESS, WE BELIEVE THE CONVERSATION
WAS USEFUL.
EDMONDSON

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